

# **INVITATION TO ENTER INTO A BLANKET PURCHASE AGREEMENT (BPA) FOR THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES PROGRAM (ITSP) II (GENERAL SUPPORT)**

## **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (AS OF 29 NOVEMBER 2001)**

Questions submitted in response to the ITSP II Invitation will not be answered directly via reply email but will be posted on this website for all potential BPA Holders to review. This document includes questions received to date, with their answers. If you have submitted a question that is not posted here, we are still formulating an answer and will post it as soon as that answer is available.

1Q. For large businesses, is the signed ACO assessment of past compliance with socio-economic goals (see Para 6c of the Invitation) included in the 10 page limit for the proposal?

1A. No, it is not included in the 10 page limit.

2Q. Do you want copies of the labor category descriptions and rates for ourselves and all team members included with the BPA submission, or is the identification of the URL/websites under the company(s) admin data sheets sufficient?

2A. Complete listings of all labor categories and rates available per FSS should be available via the URL/website provided for each BPA Holder/Team Member. However, in demonstrating your ability to provide relevant labor categories, we expect that you would summarize those categories seen as strengths for the BPA evaluation process.

3Q. If we have a woman-owned SDB as a team member, may this company also qualify as an SB to help meet the socio economic goals? Or do we need to have three separate companies (one SB, one SDB, and one woman-owned)?

3A. You would need to have three (3) separate companies. However, each of these goals may be exceeded. The intent of this program is to provide opportunities to various company types within the small business community. However, if a business meets all of the socio-economic goals, they will not be prohibited from performing the work and the ordering organization will receive appropriate credit toward goals in each of the categories.

4Q. We assume that accompanying rates and category descriptions are not required to be submitted with our response to the BPA, unless such rates, descriptions and/or service differ by location. Is this a correct assumption?

4A. We do not expect you to provide a copy of your GSA FSS rates as an attachment to the BPA as long as they are posted on your company website. However, if you are providing discounted rates by location for any of the ITSP II locations listed in Appendix A, you should notify us in your BPA proposal of your intention to do so and clearly post those discounted rates on your website.

5Q. We have a question that relates to Item #25, Invoices, Page 18. This question concerns the possible teaming relationships that are options to be considered for organizing teams and for subsequent relationships between team members and the Government. Page 5 of the invitation for BPAs for the ITSP II (General Support) for the USAF ESC states, "If BPA Team Arrangements permit direct ordering to Team Members, each Team Member must completed and sign/date below indicating agreement and compliance the Terms and Conditions set forth in this BPA. Subcontractors are not required to sign this BPA.

a. What roles does the Team Leader have vis-à-vis the Government if the Government chooses to order directly from a Team Member, other than the Prime Contractor/Team Leader?

b. If a direct order is placed with a Team Member, will the Team Leader be informed of the details of each order?

c. Does an arrangement that permits direct ordering with a Team Member other than the Prime or Team Leader also therefore permit direct invoicing to the Government by the Team Member to whom the direct order was placed by the Government?

d. What is the effect of a Prime not permitting direct ordering by any of its Team Members? Is that an option for a Prime, or must direct ordering by the Government be an essential term and condition of the BPA in order to classify a Team Member as other than a Subcontractor?

5A. a. A Team Lead should play a similar role to a Prime Contractor. However, depending on the program and the Program Office management style, each situation can be different. The only time the Government would choose to order directly from a Team Member is when the order must be issued directly to obtain socio-economic credit toward ESC's goals. The Team Lead would have proposed work be done by a specific Team Member before we would direct that an order be issued to them.

b. It is the Team Lead's responsibility to maintain management oversight of your Team Member orders. Depending on the program and the Program Office management style, each situation can be different.

c. Yes, work performed under a direct order must be billed directly to the Government by the company that provided the support.

d. A Team Lead can certainly decide not to allow direct orders to be placed with their Team Members. However, in order for ESC to meet its socio-economic goals, we must award effort to several different business types. Socio-economic goal attainment is included in the evaluation criteria for the task orders issued under this program. Therefore, ability to win competitions may be hampered depending on Team Lead company size/type.

6Q. Another question regarding ITSP II proposal instructions. Letter dated 29 Oct 01, Item #8c states "A narrative description of the Team's strength vis-à-vis the applicable GSA FSS upon which ESC can draw to satisfy requirements. Provide an explanation of what the BPA Holder and each Team Member will contribute toward maximum satisfaction of Government requirements. Correlate Team strengths with labor categories available on the applicable GSA FSS." I understand the requirement to state what GSA FSS each team member brings as well as what each team member will contribute (i.e., their applicable GSA FSSs equal their strengths); but I do not understand what is required regarding correlating labor categories to strengths. Are you wanting a listing of all the labor categories that apply to the applicable SINs of each applicable GSA FSS for each team member? If so, this could potentially take a lot of space to list. Please explain what is needed.

6A. The intent of this criteria was to avoid having BPA offerors simply provide a duplicate copy of their GSA FSS. Our intent was to have offerors highlight those areas/categories that are their strongest points and also meet Government needs.

7Q. We are on a team for the subject solicitation and were intending to bid this project under our GSA Management, Organizational Business Improvement Services contract, which is SIN 874 -1 -- Consulting Services, 874-2 -- Facilitation Services, 874-3 - Survey Services, 874-4 -- Training Services and 874-5 --Support Products. We do not see these identified under the invitation to bid. Can we use our GSA MOBIS contract vehicle if we are a subcontractor on a team?

7A. ITSP II will not use the MOBIS FSS. If you perform as a subcontractor to a Team Lead or Team Member, your Prime will utilize their applicable GSA FSS labor categories/rates.

8Q. a. Reference Cover Letter: Does this Invitation to enter into a BPA (RFP) have an identifying number?

b. Reference Cover Letter (paragraph 6) and BPA cover page: Our firm has multiple Federal Supply Service (FSS) Group 70 (Information Technology-IT) contracts. All of these contracts have the required IT Services Special Item Number (SIN), 132-51. May we include multiple GSA FSS Group 70 contracts under this BPA?

c. Reference Cover Letter paragraph 8: May we include a cover sheet, table of contents, and list of acronyms which would be excluded from the 10-page limit?

d. Reference BPA form, RFP page 9: The last item requested is the cognizant DFAS Office. Our firm deals with several DFAS offices. Was this intended to be the cognizant Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA) office?

e. Reference BPA paragraph 4 and Appendix A: Is Appendix A included in the 10-page limit?

f. Reference BPA paragraph 5: We understand that the labor rates are established by reference to the underlying GSA FSS contracts, and must be posted on our company website. Should the BPA proposal include any explicit presentation of labor rates?

g. Reference BPA paragraph 7.b.(1): We assume that General and Administrative (G&A) is payable on purchased items in accordance with the underlying GSA FSS contracts. Is this correct?

h. Reference BPA paragraph 12: We assume that General and Administrative (G&A) is payable on travel in accordance with the underlying GSA FSS contracts. Is this correct?

8A. a. No.

b. Based on information provided which revealed that multiple GSA FSS 70 contracts were the result of mergers/takeovers, etc., you may include multiple GSA FSS 70 contracts under this BPA.

c. No.

d. It should be the DFAS office responsible for payment of work performed under ITSP II. If you are proposing to provide support at several locations in accordance with Appendix A, it is possible that you would list more than one DFAS office.

e. No.

f. No.

g. Yes.

h. Yes.

9Q. a. For the Administrative Data requested on pages 7 & 8 of the invitation: Is this data to be completed and submitted for only the Prime BPA Holder, or for the Prime BPA Holder and ALL Teaming Partners?

b. If so, how should we present the data for each team partner? Each on an individual duplicate page within the reply?

c. For electronic copy of our, and our team partners', GSA schedules:

(1) Is this included within the ten page limitation?

(2) Does ESC require an electronic copy of EACH team partner's GSA schedule in addition to that of the Prime BPA holder?

d. When submitting our response, is there any particular title or name for each document (for our ten page narrative, our BPA response and our GSA Schedules) that ESC wishes us to use? Or should we merge all documents into one, less the signed/faxed cover page?

9A. a. As stated in the "ADMINISTRATIVE DATA" paragraph, "Each BPA Holder and Team Member must provide this data..."

b. Each Team Member's data should be provided on its own page within your reply.

c. Offerors are not specifically required to provide an electronic copy of GSA schedules. However, the website address where we can find these schedules must be provided.

d. Please clearly correlate document names to proposal requirements.

10Q. a. Would you please clarify the evaluation criteria in paragraph 6 of the "Memorandum for Potential Information Technology Services Program (ITSP) II Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) Holders? Subparagraphs 6a(1) and (3) seem to be the same at first reading. However, regarding paragraph 6a(1), few Government Executive agencies outside of DOD agencies have command and control systems that would be relevant to ESC. Most companies' Government experience would be obtained through prime contracts or subcontracts as referred to in subparagraph (3); contractors usually have no other relationship other than contractual with Government agencies. We are able to answer in detail both subparagraphs 6a(2) and (3). Would you please elaborate on the type of experience, other than contractual (covered by subparagraphs 2 and 3) which should be cited in subparagraph 6a(1)?

b. Page 6 of the ITSP II BPA calls for an entry entitled "Extensible Mark up Language (XML) Catalog Address." We intend to provide this information for ourselves in our BPA proposal to ESC, but discussions with potential Team Partners reveal that most do not intend to provide their XML address to us for inclusion with its BPA submission. Team Partners believe the XML information including the URL to be proprietary.

ESC may already have many of the XML addresses since many current BPA holders will also respond to this Invitation to enter into a BPA. Their BPA proposal will contain the XML URL and ESC will be able to assemble a complete list in this manner. We will provide the website address for each of our Team Members, but asks that the XML requirement be waived because of the Team Partners' objection cited above.

10A. a. Evaluation criteria 6a(1) was meant to include any experience an offeror had in C2 that was outside of DoD. Evaluation criteria 6a(1) and 6a(2) could possibly include experience an offeror can bring to the table that was not obtained via direct contract/subcontract with that offeror.

b. Each Team Member is required to complete an XML catalog. However, the Administrative Data section of the BPA has been amended to eliminate the requirement for a Team Member to provide the XML URL address to the Team Lead. Team Member XML URLs will be submitted directly to the Government and must be received prior to the Team Lead proposal being considered responsive. Further detail on this process will be posted separately at a later date.

11Q. a. In the BPA memorandum, requirement 6b: What suffices for the response to "ability to provide relevant labor categories"? Does this mean that the labor categories and descriptions posted on the XML websites should provide the answer to this question or does the BPA applicant need to provide a more lengthy discussion of our labor mix available to us through our Team members?

b. In the BPA memorandum, requirement 6c: Are the socio tracking requirements for all large companies on the team, or just the Prime BPA holder?

c. Where on the website does ESC want a technical POC identified if any?

d. Does ESC expect/want quals and demographics on subsidiaries and/or parent companies.

e. We plan to use one of our sister subsidiaries as a Team member. Does our sister subsidiary have to fulfill the XML web site requirement by creating a second XML web site similar to ours or can they be linked to our XML site?

11A. a. The intent of this criteria was to avoid having BPA offerors simply provide a duplicate copy of their GSA FSS. Our intent was to have offerors highlight those areas/categories that are relevant to the majority of ITSP II efforts including labor mix available through the Team Lead and its Team Members.

b. The requirement to provide a copy of the Administrative Contracting Officer's (ACO) signed assessment of past compliance with socio-economic subcontracting goals is for the BPA Holder.

c. Your website should have an ITSP II section which would include your technical POC.

d. If the subsidiary has its own FSS and is proposing to be a BPA Holder, information provided should be on the subsidiary. However, you should let us know who your parent company is.

e. Each Team Member should have its own XML website.

12Q. a. Do the BPA proposals need to include the XML URL for all team members, or just for the team lead?

b. In your IFB Letter, paragraph 6, you state "Team Members must have one of the applicable GSA FSS". Does this imply that I must get each Team Member to complete and sign the BPA Sheet on page four of the package (which lists all applicable GSA Schedules) AND the Team Member Endorsement on page five OR just the Team Member Endorsement?

12A. a. Each Team Member is required to complete an XML catalog. However, the Administrative Data section of the BPA has been amended to eliminate the requirement for a Team Member to provide the XML URL address to the Team Lead. Team Member XML URLs will be submitted directly to the Government and must be received prior to the Team Lead proposal being considered responsive. Further detail on this process will be posted separately at a later date.

b. Only the BPA Holder should sign the endorsement on Page 4. The Team Member endorsement on Page 5 should list in the "GSA Contract Number" section, all applicable GSA FSS for that Team Member.

13Q. a. Letter, Paragraph 4 and 8.c – It is assumed that the requirements in paragraph 4 are the "Government requirements" referred to in paragraph 8.c, second sentence. Is this correct? What other requirements are implied by the word "etc"? Please clarify.

b. Paragraph 6.c – Is the signed ACO assessment included in the 10 page limit? Please clarify.

c. Paragraph 8.b – We interpret this subparagraph to be a "past performance" capability response. Please clarify.

d. BPA, Administrative Data – Does this page have to be filled in and be submitted for each teammate by the proposing BPA Holder? Please clarify. There are some items in the XML Catalog that are considered company proprietary, such as turnover rate and customer contact lists. Teammates will probably not be willing to provide such information to the Team Leader for submittal to ESC. Suggest this be handled in an alternate, more private method such as deleting this requirement for teammates or by having each teammate submit a sealed envelope directly to the Contracting Officer. Please clarify.

13A. a. Correct, the requirements referenced in Para 8c refer back to Para 4.

b. No.

c. Para 8b requires that you provide a narrative description of your relevant Government C2 ability/experience. It does not require that you provide a past performance narrative that would provide an evaluation of how you performed versus what relevant efforts you performed.

d. Each Team Member is required to complete an XML catalog. However, the Administrative Data section of the BPA has been amended to eliminate the requirement for a Team Member to provide the XML URL address to the Team Lead. Team Member XML URLs will be submitted directly to the Government and must be received prior to the Team Lead proposal being considered responsive. Further detail on this process will be posted separately at a later date.

14Q. a. Paragraph 5 of the memorandum refers to Woman-Owned and/or Service Disabled Veteran Business (WO/SDVOB). Does this mean that awards to these businesses, whether or not they are small businesses, count toward achieving the goal of 7.5% for WO/SDVOB?

b. Also related to Paragraph 5 of the memorandum, if an award is made to a company that qualifies as more than one of the types for which socio-economic goals have been established, does that award count toward achieving more than one of the goals (e.g., when a business is small AND disadvantaged AND woman-owned, the award would count toward each of the three percentage goals)?

c. In the BPA under Administrative Data, offerors are to respond with "Yes" or "No" to the question "Are you a Woman-Owned Business?" If the response is "Yes," we are to identify under which schedule. It's our understanding that being a Woman-Owned Business (or not) applies to a business across the board, that it does not vary solicitation by solicitation. Whether or not a company is a SMALL Woman-Owned Business would vary depending on the SIC/NAICS code and sized standard that applies to each contract. If our understanding is correct, should the word "Small" be added before "Woman-Owned," or should the "If YES . . ." question be deleted?

d. The same question and reasoning of 2a) apply to the next question under Administrative Data regarding Service Disabled Veteran-Owned Business status.

e. BPA Section 4, Place of Performance, requires that each proposal include a copy of Appendix A. May companies alter this appendix (e.g., add columns for each team member, standardize location listing, etc.) to make it more readable?

f. Section 9 of the BPA addresses LH orders but no similar sections address T&M or FFP orders. Please identify which pricing types (for entire orders or for individual CLINs or SubCLINs) will be used under this BPA.

g. Related to 4a), Section 21, Paragraph c, states, among other things, that "all invoices submitted for payment shall clearly identify . . . labor hours provided per labor category." Please confirm that this requirement does not apply to FFP labor if FFP orders/CLINs/SubCLINs are to be awarded.

h. Also, in Section 21, Paragraph f, states that closeout procedures shall include a ". . . complete and accurate listing of hours expended by category, [and] the prices associated with those hours . . ." Please confirm that this requirement will not apply to FFP orders.

i. In Section 10, of the BPA, Cost Reimbursable Training, Paragraph b, please clarify what is meant by "direct labor expenses." . Since "direct labor" implies unburdened labor costs, should this be changed to read "labor expenses?" In any case, our experience has been that when the client authorizes unique training for task personnel, the labor for personnel in training is invoiced no differently than for other performance under the task, e.g., as LH, etc. We understand that the travel costs and training fees would be cost reimbursable items, but labor is not priced as cost reimbursable under our schedule contracts.

j. Both the Administrative Data and Section 23 of the BPA request the contractor's cognizant DFAS office. Since this varies by client, should contractors instead provide their cognizant DCAA office, as we did for the initial ITSP BPA?

k. Section 23 of the BPA requires BPA holders to post and maintain some information on their websites. One item listed is the FSCM number. In the Administrative Data area, we are to provide our CAGE code. Are these two items the same?

14A. a. These businesses must also be small businesses.

b. No.

- c. In the Administrative Data of the BPA, the Woman-Owned Business question should have read “Are you a Woman-Owned Small Business.”
- d. See above answer.
- e. Yes, as long as you do not add or delete locations.
- f. Only Labor Hour (LH) and Firm Fixed Price (FFP) orders will be issued under ITSP II.
- g. The BPA will be revised to include FAR Clause 52.232-1, Payments (Apr 1984), for FFP orders.
- h. Answer pending.
- i. Correct, the Government will allow contractors to bill the hours expended during training as a labor expense.
- j. We require the cognizant DFAS office. If you know in advance that there will be more than one, list them all.
- k. No, these are two different codes.

15Q. During ITSP II Industry Day, it was stated that only the Government would have access to a company's XML Web Sites (Catalog). Page 6 of the BPA requests Administrative Data for BPA Holders and Team Members and included as one of the items: "Extensible Markup Language (XML) Catalog Address." Is this address only required from the prime BPA Holder? If addresses for all team members are required, how will privacy of information listed in the catalog be maintained?

15A. Each Team Member is required to complete an XML catalog. However, the Administrative Data section of the BPA has been amended to eliminate the requirement for a Team Member to provide the XML URL address to the Team Lead. Team Member XML URLs will be submitted directly to the Government and must be received prior to the Team Lead proposal being considered responsive. Further detail on this process will be posted separately at a later date.

16Q. a. Page 2/3, para. 6, of your letter/memo dated 29 Oct 01, requires that "All potential BPA holders, including Team Members, must be fully compliant with all terms and conditions of the BPA prior to submission of a proposal." Para. 6d and 8e requires confirmation of a conforming XML catalog with URL address. Some of the information required in the XML catalog are information on the teams where we are a member, and also those that are members of our team. Until the BPAs are awarded we can not possibly know the correct information to put in the catalog. In the past it has taken days and weeks to confirm through SAIC or the base that our sites are operational and conform. Wouldn't it be reasonable to require the conforming sites to be operational within 2 weeks of a BPA award?

b. Could you post which companies have conforming XML catalogs on the ITSP II website, as we do not have access to that information?

16A. a. When you develop your BPA proposal, your Team should be reflected in the corresponding XML catalog. Team Membership should not change based on BPA award. Therefore, your XML catalog should reflect the Team as you propose it. It is our understanding that now that PAP is operational, when you create your XML document you will be immediately notified electronically whether or not your document was accepted.

b. No, that information will not be made available.

17Q. Reference BPA paragraph 23, page 20: To the best of our knowledge, FSCM (Federal Supply Code for Manufacturers) is an obsolete term. We believe that the 4-character FSCM was replaced by the 5-character Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) code. Please advise if the reference to "FSCM" should be changed to "CAGE".

17A. The reference to FSCM will be deleted from the BPA.

18Q. a. Please explain "direct order" awards and how they are processed. Are they required to go through the Team Prime?

b. Can you please clarify the implications of multiple FSSs on a team?

c. Is only direct C2 experience acceptable, or is a combination of C2 and C4 experience acceptable also?

d. How do we verify delivery of proposal on time with 2 business day response?

e. On attachment 2, under block 16, what is the error ? not a valid link ?

18A. a. The only time the Government would issue a direct order to a Team Member is when the order must be issued directly to obtain socio-economic credit toward ESC's goals. The Team Lead would have proposed work be done by a specific Team Member before we would direct that an order be issued to them. The detailed effort as provided in the proposal would be translated into a task order that would be awarded to the Team Member simultaneously with award of the balance of the effort to the Team Lead. It is the Team Lead's responsibility to maintain management oversight of Team Member orders. However, contract modifications, invoicing, payment, etc. are accomplished directly between the Team Member issued the direct order and the Government. Depending on the program and the Program Office management style, each situation can be different.

b. Multiple FSS on a Team has no bearing on BPA award. However, depending on the detailed efforts required by task orders, certain FSS may be more fitting to a specific requirement.

c. As long as an offeror has appropriate C2 experience, C4 experience will not eliminate them.

d. Offerors submitting proposals on the last day, 30 Nov 01, will be notified as soon as possible. Suggest you maintain a copy of your email submittal.

e. An MS-Excel worksheet was embedded in Block 16 of the DD Form 1423. In the event some people were unable to open the file (which resulted in the error message), we included instructions under the link that reads "If the above file does not open, you can download it at [www.herbh.hanscom.af.mil/esc\\_opps.asp?rfp=R189](http://www.herbh.hanscom.af.mil/esc_opps.asp?rfp=R189))." The file description is "Funds and Man-Hour Expenditure Report Format (See Invitation to Enter Into a Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) for ITSP II (General) dtd 29Oct01)."

19Q. Reference the ITSP XML Editor. For Company Information, Socio\_Economic\_Factors: There is no selection for 'Service Disabled Veteran Owned Company.' Is this an omission?

19A. Yes, it was omitted because this was not a requirement when the PAP was originally developed. We are currently working with the contracting office that administers the PAP contract to have this element added.

20Q. Question number 8(C), "A narrative description of the Team's strength vis-à-vis the applicable GSA FSS upon which ESC can draw to satisfy requirements. Provide an explanation of what the BPA Holder and each Team Member will contribute toward maximum satisfaction of Government requirements. Correlate Team strengths with labor categories available on the applicable GSA FSS". Can you please clarify this question?

20A. The intent of this criteria was to avoid having BPA offerors simply provide a duplicate copy of their GSA FSS. Our intent was to have offerors highlight those areas/categories that are their strongest points and also meet Government needs.

21Q. My question concerns team members and the requirement for the XML Catalog to be operational prior to BPA proposal submission. If a Team Member (Small Business) is working on, but has not yet totally completed their XML Catalog conforming to the ITSP II DTD, can they still be included as a Team Member in the BPA Proposal with the understanding that the Team Member can not be direct awarded a Task Order under this BPA until they do complete their XML Catalog requirement?



21A. Team Member XML Catalog requirements must be met prior to BPA proposal submission.

22Q. Can a Team Leader on the ITSP II contract receive credit based on the Department of Defense (DoD) Indian Incentive Program (<http://www.selltoairforce.org/Programs/native/update.htm>) if they subcontract to an American Indian-owned business? What if the American Indian-owned business is a team member?"

22A. The BPA has been amended to incorporate by reference FAR Clause 52-226-1, Utilization of Indian Organizations and Indian-Owned Economic Enterprises (June 2000). In order to qualify, effort performed must be via pure subcontract and not by a Team Member with a directed order.

23Q. Based on the answer to question 3 posted today, we would like to verify that the following team composition meets the stated socio-economic goals:

- 1 SDB
- 1 HUBZone certified small business
- 2 Woman owned

Our concern is if the HUBZone certified small business can be used to meet the small business goal.

23A. A HUBZone company's portion of a delivery order would count toward the overall 35% small business goal. Assuming that the SDB share of the work was at least 7.5% and the WOB share of the work was likewise at least 7.5%, the socio-economic requirements would be met.

24Q. Why are there no goals for HUBZone businesses included in this Invitation?

24A. When our acquisition strategy was developed we were unaware of any HUBZone certified companies with (1) a knowledge of command and control systems, and (2) a GSA FSS contract. Research was performed using PRONet, the SBA data base, and didn't identify any HUBZone companies with the right skills.

25Q. According to the Q&A document released on 5 November, cover sheets, tables of contents, and acronym lists are not permitted in addition to the 10-page limitation. Standard practice is to include a Non-Disclosure Statement on the cover sheet or title page, with reference made to the statement in the footer on each page. Assuming title pages are also not permitted, how does ESC recommend we include the Non-Disclosure Statement? Also, will a one-page cover letter be allowed, or will it count against the 10-page limitation?

25A. We will allow a cover sheet with a non-disclosure statement on it, however, we don't see the need for a Table of Contents, Acronym List, etc., since this is not a large detailed proposal.

26Q. According to Page 3, Paragraph 6.a.3 of the BPA Invitation, you are seeking "Direct experience in Government C2 via contract/subcontract". Can you please describe exactly what is meant as well as the differences between this requirement and those identified in Paragraphs 6.a.1 and 6.a.2?

26A. Evaluation criteria 6a(1) was meant to include any experience an offeror had in C2 that was outside of DoD. Evaluation criteria 6a(1) and 6a(2) could possibly include experience an offeror can bring to the table that was not obtained via direct contract/subcontract with that offeror. Evaluation criteria 6a(3) includes experience obtained via contracts/subcontracts.

27Q. Per the revised Admin Data Sheet (page 7 of the revised BPA), the Team Member XML "...address is not required to be filled in by Team Members prior to submission to Team Lead. It will be submitted directly to the Government." However, per para 6d of your revised memo dtd 8 Nov, the prime is still required to submit "A completed XML Catalog conforming to the ITSP DTD and web address URL." The DTD Specification Guide for the XML Catalog requires one "PARTNER\_XML\_CATALOG\_URL" for every "PARTNER\_COMPANY\_NAME" provided. How can we provide a "completed XML catalog conforming to the ITSP II DTD..." without the Partner Company XML URLs?

27A. You are correct, the DTD Specification Guide currently requires that the Partner XML Catalog URL field be completed as a mandatory field. However, the system can not distinguish the characters you input as correct. Therefore, you may fill this field with anything you want (i.e. Xs, zeroes etc.) and you will have a conforming catalog. The system is being changed to make this an optional field for data entry. In the meantime, just fill the field with the characters of your choice.

28Q. Since the whole idea behind teaming is to bring together companies who each have their own specialized skills and areas of expertise, forming a group that can provide a better solution than each member individually, why are companies who do not currently possess specific C2 experience prohibited from participating as a team member, especially if that team member can provide critical functions within the information technology realm of this BPA?

28A. A Team should offer the strongest possible combination of all of the equally important evaluation factors.

29Q. It appears that credit will not be given to team members who utilize small business for subcontracting work (with the exception of American Indian owned businesses). This seems to eliminate the incentive for primes to allocate a portion of the work to deserving companies, thereby severely hampering the ability of newer small businesses to gain the experience required to become full team members in the future. Bearing in mind the intent of these programs, could the BPA be amended to allow credit toward socio-economics goals for subcontracting to all (WOSB, SDB, HUBZone, etc.) qualifying small businesses?

29A. The inability for ESC to get credit for subcontracted work is not a program choice, but an overall Air Force electronic system problem. Our current electronic contracting systems do not allow for such subcontracts to be tracked.

30Q. May a company who does not yet have a GSA FSS work as a team member under a co-team member's FSS? If not, please explain the reason.

30A. Team Members must have a current applicable GSA FSS. If a particular company wants to participate on your team, but does not have a GSA FSS, they must perform as a subcontractor and utilize their prime's GSA FSS categories and rates. You may submit your proposal including them as a subcontractor and then add them as a team member when they obtain a GSA FSS because team members can be added at any time.

31Q. Memorandum, paragraph 8: We see that the font size has been established at 10. Does this font size apply to graphics and tables as well as text?

31A. Yes

32Q. Memorandum, paragraph 6: We understand the requirement to hold certain identified GSA Schedules at the time of submission on 30 November. If after BPA issuance, a Team Leader migrated its existing Schedules into one document, a corporate Schedule, in accordance with all GSA rules, will the BPA be amended to show the corporate Schedule number?

32A. Yes

33Q. Question and Answer #10: The answer in #10A, b, 3rd sentence leaves the response time open-ended. It is recommended that each Team Member who will submit its XML URL address directly to ESC be required to submit such address directly to ESC not later than 30 Nov 01 or the Team Member will not be considered as part of the Team Lead's team.

33A. All Team Member XML URL addresses must be received by ESC NLT 30 Nov 01 or the BPA Proposal for that Team Lead will be considered non-responsive. It is the BPA Holder/Team Lead responsibility to ensure that all of their Team Member's XML URL addresses are received by ESC on or before the due date of 30 Nov 01.

34Q. Please clarify the meaning of the terms "Team Member" and subcontractor. They seem to be used as mutually exclusive terms; however, they are not necessarily.

34A. In order to be a Team Member, you must have an applicable GSA FSS. Team Members may be issued directed task orders in order for the Government to obtain socio-economic credit. A subcontractor is not required to have an applicable GSA FSS. The Government may not obtain socio-economic credit for effort performed by subcontractors.

35Q. If a subcontractor holds a GSA Schedule 70 contract, does that automatically mean the subcontractor must use those rates in responding to the prime "Team Member" or subcontractor and must then post information on and maintain a web site?

35A. If you know in advance that you have a company you wish to have on your team, and that company has an applicable GSA FSS, it would seem that you would include that company as a Team Member, which would require that they maintain a website. However, if you choose to include that company on your team as a subcontractor, you may propose as you wish, but the GSA FSS contract number referenced on the resulting task order will be that of the prime (whether the prime is the BPA Team Lead or a Team Member) therefore, the labor categories and rates must fit within that GSA FSS. Subcontractors are not required to maintain a website.

36Q. Could a subcontractor, described in paragraph 6 of your invitation, dated 29 October 2001, as a "pure" subcontractor (meaning?) receive direct awards?

36A. In this case, a pure subcontractor would perform through a prime contractor that may be the Team Lead or another Team Member. A subcontractor is not required to have an applicable GSA FSS, therefore, they may use their prime's GSA FSS labor categories and rates. If the subcontractor does not have an applicable GSA FSS, they may not be a Team Member and therefore, will never receive a directed task order from the Government.

37Q. Will a Team Member who is to receive a direct award be issued its own BPA?

37A. No

38Q. Reference paragraph 21.f. of the BPA terms. This paragraph discusses close-out procedures as if the orders to be placed were under cost-reimbursement terms and conditions, complete with agreed-to billing rates, a requirement to update those rates, and to determine final billing rates. Please explain how this applies in the context of a labor-hour or firm fixed price order. We see no requirement for such a procedure or process, even though part of an order may be cost-reimbursable. The clause at 52.232-7 would control in event of a labor-hour contract and such a procedure is inapplicable to firm-fixed-priced orders.

38A. Answer pending.

39Q. Para 6c (which is part of the evaluation criteria) of the Government's Memorandum inviting bids for ITSP II, dated 29 Oct 2001, and revised 8 November 2001, states: "c. Successful track record in meeting socio-economic subcontracting goals. Large Business offerors are required to provide a copy of their Administrative Contracting Officer's (ACO) signed assessment of past compliance with socio-economic subcontracting goals as an attachment to the proposal."

As an interested vendor whose intent is to respond as a prime offeror, we are currently transitioning from the small to the large business category. Our prime contracts experience has been predominantly as an 8(a), SDB, or Small Business with no socio-economic subcontracting requirements; however, our GSA Schedule 70 was awarded to us as a Large Business. We will therefore be proposing as a Large Business for this procurement without any ability to provide an ACO's signed assessment of past socio-economic compliance.

a. Does this situation make our response inherently non-responsive? If so, in what manner does the Government expect a small business to transition to the large business category and meet socio-economic goals if we cannot be considered in a competitive environment for that type of contract?

b. If our proposal will be considered responsive despite our lack of ability to provide the required ACO letter, this offeror requests that the Government waive this requirement for firms which do not have any contracts with socio-economic goals.

39A. In lieu of the ACO signed assessment of past compliance with socio-economic subcontracting goals you may provide documentation which demonstrates your historical record of providing work and opportunities to the types of businesses included in our socio-economic goals. You should include a brief explanation of your recent transition to large business.

40Q. If a vendor intends to be a Team Lead, and also be a Team Member on another vendors Team, does that vendor need to have two XML catalogs; one as a Team Lead with Team Members listed, and the second listing the Team Lead and our company as a Team Partner?

40A. No.

41Q. Please identify the email address to whom we send our XML Catalog URL for PAP acceptance.

41A. The BPA will be revised to include the correct address for submission of the XML Catalog URL. This address will be the same as the address for BPA proposal submission.

42Q. Item 8a of the BPA cover letter states that a bidder must submit with the proposal a responsive copy of the BPA with all administrative fill-ins completed. We understand that the cover/signature page contained in the RFP must be faxed to you. However, we are unsure as to whether you require only the electronic submission of the three (3) forms in the solicitation (ESC Signature Form, Team Member Endorsement Form, ESC BPA Administrative Data Form), or the entire BPA document including these forms. Please clarify.

42A. Anything with a signature from a Team Lead or Team Member must be faxed to the number provided in the Invitation. Everything else may be provided electronically.

43Q. Is it correct to assume that a font size smaller than 10 is acceptable for tables and figures provided the tables and figures are legible?

43A. No.

44Q. For those bidders responding to both the ITSP II and the ITSP Specialized Cost Services (SCS) BPAs, are we correct in assuming separate and distinct XML files are required to accommodate differences in team members, points of contact, experience, etc.?

44A. No, only one XML catalog is required. However, a search field is being added to the DTD to indicate which type of BPA a company has. If your DTD is already complete and submitted, completion of this new field will require a revised submission of the DTD. At this time, we do not know when the revised DTD will be released.

45Q. I am getting questions from some of our team mates regarding the XML catalog. If the company has not had an ITSP BPA in the past and is not sure if we will get a BPA why the requirement for the catalog upon submission? Can the company certify that the catalog will be posted following award?

45A. No. In order for your Team proposal to be considered responsive, all requirements, including the XML Catalog, must be met.

46Q. Both the ITSP II and SCS II BPAs require an XML Catalog. Are two separate catalogs required, one for each program?

46A. No. See answer to Question 44.

47Q. There are several Team Leads that are also Team Members for ITSP II. If a Team Lead submits their XML Catalog URL with their proposal as a Team Lead will ESC ensure that that company is also "checked off" as being responsive as a Team Member on another Team? To clarify, we are concerned that those Team Members that are also Team Leads will not be counted as being responsive under our proposal and ESC may decide to throw out our proposal thinking that a Team Member did not submit an XML URL as a Team Member when in fact it was submitted as a Team Lead.

47A. Yes. Before we would consider a proposal to be non-responsive, we would check to see if the XML Catalog URL has been submitted under a different Team Lead, etc.

48Q. If a team lead has more than one FSS schedule should we select just one to utilize for the BPA?

48A. The BPA Holder and Team Members may use any applicable FSS as stated in the Invitation.

49Q. If we cannot complete the XML implementation or confirm its successful operation by BPA submission date (30 Nov) but will be able to do so by the award date, are we excluded from bidding altogether?

49A. In order to be considered to be responsive, all requirements must be met upon proposal submission.

50Q. REFERENCE page 7, Administrative Data: What does the term "provide this data" mean? Do we need to electronically submit all team members Administrative Data along with the DRC Admin data? Do we need to print out our teams Admin Data and fax it along with our signed cover page? Can we have the team members link this administrative data on our own website?

50A. Yes, your electronic BPA proposal must include the Administrative Data for yourself and all Team Members. The Team Member endorsement signature pages must be faxed with your signed Cover Page.

51Q. Will the withhold amounts provided for in FAR 52.232-7, "Payments under Time-and-Materials and Labor-Hour Contracts," apply at the BPA level, not the task order level, as it is in the current ITSP BPA?

51A. Correct. The withhold amounts will apply at the overall BPA level, not each individual task order.

52Q. I would like to know if the ITSP II will be reopened for more contractors in the future. If so, when?

52A. At this time we cannot predict when or if the Invitation for BPAs will be reopened. BPAs will be reviewed annually and the Invitation will be reopened, if necessary, to obtain a broader field of expertise or meet socio-economic goals.

53Q. In the question and answer sheet, question number 41 says "Please identify the email address to whom we send our XML Catalog URL for PAP acceptance". What do you mean by PAP acceptance? Do we need to send the xml catalog URL before we submit our proposal?

53A. A compliant XML catalog URL must be included as part of your proposal. It doesn't matter if you submit the address before or with your proposal. In Question 41, the term "PAP acceptance" was used by a potential offeror and not the Government.

54Q. a. The XML Document Editor User's Manual, Chapter 3, Paragraph 3.9.1 allows multiple entries for ITSP\_BPA\_HOLDER\_COMPANIES. Are we required to provide this information for all of our Team Members (as defined in the BPA document) who are also BPA Holders?

b. The XML Document Editor User's Manual, Chapter 3, Paragraph 3.9.2 has an optional requirement to provide the "MEMBER\_ITSP\_URL". Does "MEMBER" refer to the BPA Holder Company or all Team Members who have BPA's or all Team Members? If it refers to multiple Team Members, will procedures be published to add "branches" to the XML catalog under paragraph 3.9.2?

c. The XML Document Editor User's Manual, Chapter 3, Paragraph 3.10.3 deals with "TEAMING PARTNERS" which is a term not used in the BPA invitation or document. Please clarify the definition of a TEAMING PARTNER in terms of the BPA Invitation and document.

54A. a. No, this is for your company ITSP BPA Holder company only. You do not fill this information in for your team members. If you do not have a BPA Holder company, then you are considered your BPA Holder company. Fill this information in with your company name. Please read the DTD specification guide on this element.

b. This is your ITSP\_URL. Please read the DTD specification guide on this Element.

c. Teaming Partner equals Team Member. Please read the DTD specification guide on this element.

55Q. a. What other signature page(s) do we need to fax to you in addition to the TEAM MEMBER ENDORSEMENT and do we have to mail the original(s) to your attention?

b. Do we (the prime) need to submit an electronic version of our GSS Schedule 70 IT as part of our ITSP II BPA proposal?

c. Do we need to submit any administrative data on our Teaming Partner as part of our proposal? (We have included the capabilities of our Teaming Partner in our integrated Team capabilities proposal).

55A. a. The BPA Cover Page. No need to mail originals at this time.

b. No.

c. Administrative Data for each BPA Holder and Team Member must be provided as part of your BPA proposal.

56Q. The Government's response to Question #11c in the previous questions and answers states "Your website should have an ITSP II section which would include your technical POC." Question: We are currently maintaining a website for ITSP I which has all of the required information. Furthermore, our XML catalog submission will list all of the ITSP II proposed team members. Do we also need to establish a separate ITSP II website, or section within our existing website, with links to all of the proposed ITSP II team members prior to proposal submission?

56A. Yes.

57Q. a. Can we submit our XML catalog now with the minimum required information in it, as a test for validation, then continue to add information to it beyond the minimum required fields, and resubmit later, prior to the official deadline for submittal? We would like to do this to ensure that there are not validation errors, which we might not be able to identify prior to our submittal.

b. What, if any, liability is a team lead under to the Govt for work performed by a team mate under the team lead's BPA when the team member's GSA schedule is used?

57Q. a. All mandatory fields must be completed and valid prior to BPA proposal submission.

b. Liability is a very broad term, however, the Government's contractual relationship (and recourse) would be with the Team Lead with whom the subject task order is placed. If for attainment of socio-economic goals, an order was placed with a Team Member, other than the Team Lead, then the Government's contractual relationship would be with the Team Member.

58Q. Are Subs required to submit an XML catalog or just the prime?

58A. Only BPA Holders and Team Members are required to submit an XML catalog.

59Q. Revision 2 to the ITSP II BPA invitation changed paragraph 23 to include the offerors' TIN as an item listed on the offerors' web site. The tax identification number is a piece of information that should not be made available to the general public. This piece of data is part of the XML catalog, which is required by the BPA invitation. Will the Government delete the requirement for the TIN to be listed on the offerors' web site?

59A. We will not access XML catalogs to obtain TINs. The TIN must be listed on the website.